

# 60 seconds with Tom Okarma



Tom Okarma

Ten months ago, this Chicago executive didn't know CMA existed. Today, he can't say enough about why Christian Management Partners is one of his top priorities.

By Mark Cutshall

*After building a successful insurance career, Tom Okarma found himself wanting to do more beyond his work. Last April, a friend invited him to attend CMA's annual conference in Long Beach.*

**CMR:** You really didn't know anything about CMA until just a few days before the CMA Long Beach 2005 conference, is that right?

**OKARMA:** Yes. Sharon Swing, a communications consultant who served as executive vice president of strategic planning for the Willow Creek Association, said there were some opportunities waiting for me, including the chance to meet others with a common desire to advance the work of hundreds of CMA member ministries.

**CMR:** What did you do?

**OKARMA:** I went to CMA Long Beach 2005 and discovered everything Sharon said about CMA was true. I was very impressed by the people and how CMA really is equipping ministry leaders and teams with practical management training and mentoring. CMA is big enough to impact the U.S. and yet it's personable enough to make you feel welcomed. Through Christian Management Partners I met other business leaders with a shared passion to use their experience, talents and resources to advance the ministry of CMA.

**CMR:** Sounds like your conference experience, especially your time discovering Christian Management Partners, has ignited your own passion to make your life count even more.

**OKARMA:** Absolutely. For years, my passion in business has been organizational issues and taking businesses to the next level. Today, I realize I've got all this experience, and I want to find ways to share it with others. Through the leadership of Russ Robinson, Chairman of the CMP Board of Advisors, it's clear that by growing the membership and commitment of

CMP we can multiply CMA's ever-increasing impact on ministries. Managers and leaders won't find this quality of management training and mentoring anywhere else.

**CMR:** Say more about how you're getting your hands dirty.

**OKARMA:** I'm part of what we call a Chicago SWAT team that Russ has brought together to cast the vision for CMP set in motion by Mark Bankord, a member of the CMA Board of Directors, and by George Duff, a CMA senior advisor.

It's a vision to identify 500 business people who will step up to the plate with their hearts and with their dollars. CMP's potential to affect a multitude of ministries through CMA will appeal to people in all regions of the country. I believe the more they learn about Christian Management Partners, the more they'll want to join this pioneering effort that can affect the Lord's work for decades to come.

**CMR:** And yet there's work to be done now.

**OKARMA:** For the last 30 years I've built a rewarding career. For years my only involvement with Christian nonprofits was to write a check and cheer from the sidelines. At some point however, every person has to look back and ask, "What have I done with my career and my life? What will continue on after I'm gone? What have I done to practice my faith?"

**CMR:** And, for you, the answer is . . .

**OKARMA:** Christian Management Partners. It's where I'm being called to serve.

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## CMA Salutes the CMP Board of Advisors!

**Christian Management Partners** invites business men and women to join this innovative movement that supports CMA and networks business people together who are exploring ways to blend their faith with their work. For information and the listing of the 45 members of the Christian Management Partners Board of Advisors, go to [CMAonline.org/cmp](http://CMAonline.org/cmp) or email Suzy West at [Suzy@CMAonline.org](mailto:Suzy@CMAonline.org) or Russ Robinson, chairman, CMP board of advisors, at [rrobinson@rppmalaw.com](mailto:rrobinson@rppmalaw.com).

**Join your colleagues** at the Christian Management Partners 6th Annual Summit, March 13-14, 2006, in Denver, Colo. For information on how to receive an invitation, contact Suzy West at [Suzy@CMAonline.org](mailto:Suzy@CMAonline.org). The summit runs concurrently with CMA Colorado 2006, March 13-16. For information, go to [www.CMAonline.org/cmp](http://www.CMAonline.org/cmp).